

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 H-03 EB-11 PM-07

AID-20 OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-03

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PRS-01 DRC-01 /144 W

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O R 201230Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5795

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

CINCEUR

CINCUSNAVEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 1414

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP PFOR EG US

SUBJECT: SUEZ CANAL MINE CLEARANCE

REF STATE 54440

1. PURSUANT REFTTEL I DISCUSSED WITH FAHMY THIS MORNING DEPARTMENT/DOD THINKING ON NATURE OF UK ASSISTANCE IN PLANNED USN MINE SWEEPING OPERATION IN SUEZ CANAL. SPECIFICALLY, POSSIBILITY (A) UK SWEEPING PORT SAID ANCHORAGE AREA PRIOR TO LPG'S ARRIVAL, AND (B) USING BRITISH SOVEREIGN BASE ON CYPRUS FOR CERTAIN LOGISTIC SUPPORT OPERATIONS.

2. I POINTED OUT BRITISH HAVE BEEN PRESSING US TO DEFINE THEIR PARTICIPATION. IN CONSIDERING MATTER, WE HAVE BORNE IN MIND FAHMY'S EARLIER REQUEST THAT US NAVY ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERALL OPERATION AND WORK OUT WITH BRITS WHAT THEY MIGHT FEASIBLY CONTRIBUTE. I KNEW BRITISH NAVAL SURVEY TEAM IS CURRENTLY IN EGYPT AND IS REPORTEDLY DISCUSSING BRITISH ROLE WITH SCA AND  
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EGYPTIAN NAVY. SCA AND EGYPTIAN NAVY HAVE ALSO BEEN

PRESSING US FOR INFORMATION ON OUR OPERATIONAL PLAN, WHICH WE WILL OF COURSE WANT TO PROVIDE ONCE PLANNING FOR SO COMPLEX AN OPERATION IS FINALIZED. MEANWHILE, WE ARE STILL AWAITING INFORMATION FROM EGYPTIAN NAVY ABOUT GOE-LAID MINES IN PORT SAID APPROACHES. I THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT THAT EGYPTIAN NAVY BE ADVISED TO AVOID MAKING ANY FIRM COMMITMENTS UNTIL US NAVY HAS HAD OPPORTUNITY TO WORK OUT ITS OPERATIONAL CONCEPT.

3. FAHMY AGREED AND SAID GOE SEES NO OBJECTION TO THE TYPE OF BRITISH PARTICIPATION WE ENVISAGE. I ASKED IF MINISTER OF WAR, MARSHAL ISMAIL, SHOULD BE CONSULTED. FAHMY UNDERTOOK TO GET IN TOUCH WITH ISMAIL AND HAVE HIM TELL EGYPTIAN NAVY TO GO SLOW UNTIL THEY HAVE MORE DETAILS FROM US. FAHMY HOPED THAT SUCH AN OPERATIONAL PLAN MIGHT BE FORTHCOMING BEFORE TOO LONG.

4. SPEAKING AS A FRIEND AS WELL AS FOREIGN MINISTER, FAHMY EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREFUL ATTENTION TO EGYPTIAN NAVY AND CIVILIAN SENSITIVITIES IN CONDUCTING MINE CLEARANCE OPERATION. HE NOTED GOE WELCOMES THIS USG ASSISTANCE, BUT ADVISED STRONGLY THAT USN MAKE IT APPEAR A GENUINE COOPERATIVE EFFORT WITH THE EGYPTIAN NAVY. FAILURE TO DO SO COULD HURT THE POSITIVE POLITICAL IMPACT WHICH BOTH USG AND GOE ARE ANXIOUS TO ACHIEVE FROM THIS OPERATION. I ASSURED HIM THAT, IN BOTH PLANNING AND CONDUCTING THIS OPERATION, US NAVY ALREADY HAS THIS IN MIND. US NAVY HAS HAD CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN WORKING WITH OTHER STATES AND HE COULD COUNT UPON ITS DESIRE TO MAKE THIS OPERATION NOT ONLY A TECHNICAL, BUT ALSO A POLITICAL AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SUCCESS.

5. FAHMY AHD ALSO SEEN FRIEDHEIM'S PERTINENT COMMENTS AS PUBLISHED IN THE PRESS. HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL IF ADMIRAL MCCAULEY COULD MAKE A PRELIMINARY VISIT TO EGYPT ASAP TO MEET APPROPRIATE EGYPTIAN NAVY AND SCA OFFICIALS. THIS, IN HIS VIEW, SHOULD BE DONE EVEN BEFORE LPH ARRIVES. GENERAL GUAY AND I CONCUR IN DESIRABILITY OF SUCH A VISIT.

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## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** BEXP, PFOR, EG, US, UK  
**To:** STATE  
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